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Home of Jazz at Lincoln Center

MARCH 2007

JAZZ AT
LINCOLN
CENTER
presents

A masterpiece by
Wynton Marsalis
comes home to Jazz
at Lincoln Center.
By Scott H.
Thompson

*This May, Wynton
Marsalis will celebrate
the 15th anniversary of
In This House,
On This Morning.*

CLAY PATRICK MCBRIDE



In This House

The very first piece that Jazz at Lincoln Center commissioned from Wynton Marsalis, 15 years ago, was *In This House, On This Morning*, a masterful work that takes the form of an African American church service. "We've played that piece all over the world," Marsalis says. "We've played in churches around the country. We've played it in Europe. And always to great effect." This spring it comes back home for its first Lincoln Center performance since its May 27, 1992 premiere. ➤

In This House



Wynton Marsalis

In This House, On This Morning is a spiritual work dealing with the concept of affirmation and utilizing, in the context of jazz, various aspects of a church service: hymn, processional, sermon, prayer, shouts, alter call, devotional, and more.

"Some of it is introspective, some of it is praise, some of it is prayerful," explains Marsalis. "Some of it is exotic. The whole service is a dialogue with God. We have a sermon in the middle of it called 'In the Sweet Embrace of Life' because it is performed in the spirit of jazz—we believe in life." Several preachers, Marsalis reveals, taught him the secrets of writing an effective sermon: "Start low, go slow, reach a little higher, catch on fire!"

Marsalis reflects back to the 1992 premiere. "At the time, the band was all guys that had grown up in the church: Eric Reed, Reginald Veal, Todd Williams, Wyckiffe Gordon, Herlin Riley. The only two people who hadn't grown up in the church were me and Wess Anderson. We were both children of jazz musicians, so we grew up in another kind of church," he says with a smile. Joining the original lineup this season is Richard Johnson.

"I want people to walk away feeling good," says Marsalis. "Jazz music can be put in many different contexts. There was a time when it was thought of as the devil's music, yet many jazz musicians came out of the church. A lot of the church singing is blues. Mahalia Jackson's favorite singer was Bessie Smith."

In This House

Renowned journalist Stanley Crouch reviewed *In This House* for its 1992 CD liner notes. "What we hear is a work that steps right up next to Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown, and Beige* in its command of material," Crouch wrote. "Marsalis recognizes the artistic and structural possibilities of the Afro-American church ritual, just as the masters of the European Renaissance saw so well what could happen when they brought the complex human insights of the Biblical texts together with the mastery of perspective. *In This House* brings the broad spiritual perspective at the root of jazz together with the intellectual achievements that have taken place in an art built upon the melody, the harmony, and the rhythms of the blues. Marsalis is capable of this because he knows a truth quite profound: the blues is the sound of spiritual investigation in a secular frame, and through its very lyricism, the blues achieves its spiritual penetration."

Come enjoy an evening of spiritual and musical rejuvenation when Marsalis and friends bring *In This House, On This Morning* to Rose Theater on May 24–26, 2007—its first presentation in the House of Swing, Frederick P. Rose Hall.

For tickets, call CenterCharge at 212-721-6500 or log on to www.jalc.org.

*Scott H. Thompson is Assistant Director for Public Relations
at Jazz at Lincoln Center.*



Dianne Reeves

April is Jazz Appreciation Month. Performances by the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Grammy Award-winning Dianne Reeves, Dr. John, and the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra with Arturo O'Farrill are some of the highlights of the month. Also, jazz education classes will be in full swing for jazz lovers of all ages including adult classes on "Advanced Jazz History" and "Duke Ellington" taught by Phil Schaap, and Webop! classes for the two-to-five-year-old set. Check the Jazz at Lincoln Center Web site at www.jalc.org for complete details.